



NEWS RELEASE

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32 STATES TO RECEIVE OVER \$6.8 MILLION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

WASHINGTON, September 17, 2002 - Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced that 32 states will receive more than \$6.8 million in rural business loan and grant funds, designed to assist in the fostering of economic development in rural areas.

“Expanding America’s rural economy depends on the development of new businesses and creation of new jobs,” said Veneman. “These grants will provide rural residents with the financial tools needed to create business ventures and expand their local economies.”

Veneman noted that nearly 400 businesses will benefit from the grant funds, along with the expectation that at least 2,400 jobs will be created or saved. Grants and loans for the 40 proposals will be provided through USDA's Rural Development [Rural Business Enterprise Grant \(RBEG\) program](#), [Rural Business Opportunity Grant \(RBOG\) program](#) and the [Intermediary Relending Program](#).

In Nebraska, the **Bassett/Rock County Chamber of Commerce** received \$164,600 in Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) funds. These monies will be used to establish a revolving loan fund in Rock County to provide business start-up, expansion, or retention loans to small rural businesses located in the county. The applicant anticipates assisting five businesses with these funds to create and/or save 16 jobs.

Jim Barr, state director for USDA Rural Development in Nebraska stated, “Advancement in business and community development is crucial to rural areas as it enables them to remain viable.” “The funds received today, will assist communities in their efforts of planning for a solid economic future.”

A complete list of the individual grant recipients can be found at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/news.htm>.

USDA Rural Development serves as the lead federal entity for rural development needs, and administers program assistance through three agencies: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, and Rural Utilities Service. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.